

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 30302 01 OF 03 171925Z

45

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EURE-00 EB-07 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 OMB-01

/085 W

----- 090312

P 171910Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5234

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 30302

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC TAKES OVER THE UDR

SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER JACQUES CHIRAC, LIVING UP TO HIS REPUTATION AS A DYNAMIC, FAST-MOVING POLITICIAN, WON THE FIRST ROUND OF A POWER STRUGGLE FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE GAULLIST MOVEMENT AT THE UDR NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN PARIS DECEMBER 14-15. HE ADDS THE TITLE OF UDR SECRETARY GENERAL TO THAT OF PARLIAMENTARY LEADER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY WHICH HE ALREADY HELD BY VIRTUE OF HIS PRIME MINISTERSHIP. WHILE HIS MOVE HAS PRECIPITATED THE LOSS OF A FEW HARD-LINE GAULLISTS, IT MAY ENHANCE THE INFLUENCE OF A LEANER BUT MORE UNITED UDR WITHIN THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE GAULLIST MOVEMENT HAS HAD NO REAL LEADER SINCE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 30302 01 OF 03 171925Z

GISCARD D'ESTAING CRUSHED CHABAN-DELMAS IN THE FIRST

ROUND OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS LAST MAY' AND THEN WENT ON TO BE ELECTED THE FIRST NON-UDR PRESIDENT OF THE FIFTH REPUBLIC. GAULLISTS HAVE BEEN UNDERSTANDABLY CHAGRINED OVER THE LOSS OF THE PRESIDENCY, AND DISSATISFIED BY DEPOSED SECRETARY GENERAL ALEXANDRE SANGUINETTI'S "UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT OF GISCARD'S POLICIES. ONE IMPORTANT BENEFICIARY OF THIS GAULLIST RESTIVENESS HAS BEEN MICHEL JOBERT (PARIS 29317), THE MAJOR PART OF WHOSE SUPPORT COMES FROM UDR RANKS. BUT JOBERT IS STILL A MINOR, ALTHOUGH IMPORTANT, PHENOMENON. THE UDR WAS RIPE FOR A TAKEOVER AND CHIRAC MOVED IN.

2. THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE UDR WERE ORIGINALLY TO HAVE BEEN HASHED OUT IN PUBLIC AT A MUCH-POSTPONED NATIONAL CONVENTION (ASSIZES) FIRST PLANNED FOR LAST SEPTEMBER, VAGUELY RESCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER, THEN FOR FEBRUARY 22-23, 1975 -- AND WHICH MAY BE POSTPONED AGAIN. IN THE INTERIM, THE 37-MEMBER EXECUTIVE BUREAU (WHICH INCLUDES AMONG ITS MEMBERS THE PRINCIPAL GAULLIST "BARONS") AND THE 113-MEMBER CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAVE IMPROVISED THEIR WAY THROUGH THE FALL, BIDDING TIME UNTIL THE CONVENTION, UNSURE OF THE BEST WAY TO REASSERT THE PRIMACY OF GAULLISM WITHIN THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY.

3. THE PRELUDE TO THE WEEKEND'S THEATRICAL EVENTS IS STILL UNCLEAR' BUT STORIES ARE CIRCULATING OF A STORMY DINNER HOSTED DECEMBER 12 BY CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND FORMER GAULLIST DEPUTY AND INTERIOR MINISTER ROGER FREY, AT WHICH CHIRAC AND THE MAJOR "BARONS" -- PIERRE MESSMER, MAURICE COUVE DE MURVILLE, JACQUES CHABAN-DELMAS, MICHEL DEBRE' OLIVIER GUICHARD AND JACQUES FOCCARD -- MULLED OVER GAULLISM'S PROBLEMS AND VARIOUS WAYS TO SURMOUNT THEM. WITHOUT FURTHER KNOWN CONSULTATION -- BUT AFTER INFORMING GISCARD AND PONIATOWSKI, AND MEETING WITH SANGUINETTI -- CHIRAC CONVOKED BY TELEGRAM AN EMERGENCY CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING SATURDAY MORNING, 30 MINUTES BEFORE THE NATIONAL COUNCIL SESSION WAS TO OPEN, AT WHICH THE STUNNED MEMBERS HEARD SANGUINETTI ANNOUNCE THAT HE INTENDED TO RESIGN AS SECRETARY GENERAL AND PROPOSED CHIRAC AS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PARIS 30302 01 OF 03 171925Z

CANDIDATE FOR IMMEDIATE ELECTION AS HIS REPLACEMENT. AMID THE TUMULT, CHIRAC WAS ELECTED BY A 57-27 VOTE AGAINST HIS ONLY OPPONENT' JACQUES LEGENDRE, A YOUNG DEPUTY (AND SANGUINETTI'S ASSISTANT), WHOSE PLAINLY FUTILE CANDIDACY NEVERTHELESS RECEIVED THE GENERAL SUPPORT OF THE "BARONS" AND HARD-CORE GAULLISTS -- THUS GIVING AN INDICATION OF THE SIZE AND DEPTH OF THE UDR SPLIT.

4. CHIRAC CHOSE HIS MOMENT CAREFULLY; THE "BARONS" AT FREY'S DINNER HAD UNWITTINGLY CONFIRMED THEIR INCAPACITY FOR DECISIVE ACTION, AND THE LIGHTNING SUDDENNESS OF CHIRAC'S MOVE ALLOWED THEM NO OPPORTUNITY FOR COHERENT OPPOSITION. CLEARLY, CHIRAC SAW A CHANCE TO BE NAMED SECRETARY GENERAL BY THE UDR CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF 113 MEMBERS IN ADVANCE OF THE ENACTMENT OF A PROPOSED REFORM OF UDR STATUTES AT THE UPCOMING CONVENTION WHICH

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 30302 02 OF 03 171935Z

45

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EURE-00 EB-07 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 OMB-01

/085 W

----- 090376

P 171910Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5235

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 30302

WOULD REQUIRE ELECTION OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL BY AN ENLARGED ONE THOUSAND-PLUS MEMBER NATIONAL COUNCIL. IT IS ALSO CONCEIVABLE THAT CHIRAC TOOK OVER THE UDR IN ORDER TO PREVENT GUICHARD, THE ONLY "BARON" WITH A POSSIBLE POLITICAL FUTURE, FROM DOING SO HIMSELF;

GUICHARD HAS BEEN VEHEMENT IN HIS DISAPPROVAL OF CHIRAC'S MOVE. THERE HAVE BEEN PERIODIC REPORTS OF TANGLES BETWEEN PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING AND CHIRAC, WITH THE LATTER TAKING HARD-LINE POSITIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES SUCH AS ENERGY AND GRAIN PRICES. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT GISCARD (WHO MUST HAVE GIVEN CHIRAC THE GREEN LIGHT) IS NOT DISPLEASED WITH THE PROSPECT OF A UDR SHORN OF ITS MOST INTRANSIGENT ELEMENTS AND FIRMLY UNDER THE THUMB OF HIS OWN PRIME MINISTER.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 30302 02 OF 03 171935Z

5. MONEY ALSO WAS A MAJOR FACTOR. THE UDR IS INCREASINGLY SHORT OF FUNDS; WHEN CHABAN AND MESSMER SERVED AS PRIME MINISTER, THE MATIGNON SAW TO IT, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THAT MONEY STEADILY FLOWED INTO THE UDR COFFERS. UNDER CHIRAC' THIS HAS NOT BEEN THE CASE. THIS DRYING UP OF RESOURCES, COUPLED WITH A RECENT SEVERE DROP IN GAULLIST MEMBERSHIP DUES COLLECTED, ALLOWED CHIRAC TO USE THE PROSPECT OF AN AT LEAST PARTIAL RESTORATION OF MATIGNON-SPONSORED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE UDR AS A LEVER TO PERSUADE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO VOTE FOR HIM.

6. CHIRAC INDICATED THAT HE EXPECTS TO HEAD THE PARTY ONLY FOR A SHORT, PROVISIONAL PERIOD; HOWEVER, HE WORDED THIS SO AS NOT TO EXCLUDE HIS REMAINING SECRETARY GENERAL FOR A LONGER PERIOD. (ACCORDING TO FIGARO' HE WILL SHORTLY NAME THREE ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERALS.) IT IS POSSIBLE THAT, TO MAINTAIN PARTY UNITY, CHIRAC MIGHT AGREE TO BE RE-ELECTED LATER BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.

7. THUS WITH ONE LIGHTNING-LIKE POWER PLAY, CHIRAC HAS BECOME THE NOMINAL LEADER OF THE UDR. ALTHOUGH THE PARTY IS DEEPLY SPLIT, HE CLEARLY CONTROLS AN ENTHUSIASTIC MAJORITY OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL; HIS SPEECH TO THAT GROUP AT SUNDAY'S SESSION WAS FOLLOWED BY A STANDING OVATION. WITH THE POWERS OF THE MATIGNON AT HIS DISPOSAL, HIS CHANCES APPEAR EXCELLENT OF CONSOLIDATING HIS POSITION OVER THE PARTY AS A WHOLE.

8. BY ASSUMING TACTICAL CONTROL, CHIRAC HAS ISOLATED THE HARD-LINE "BARONS" FROM EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THE UDR PARTY APPARATUS. FOR HIS PART, GISCARD AS PRESIDENT IS IN A BETTER POSITION TO PUT HIS PERSONAL STAMP ON FRENCH GOVERNMENT POLICIES WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY FIRMLY DISCIPLINED BY HIS PRIME MINISTER THAN HE WOULD BE IF THE UDR CONTINUED ITS PROCESS OF

DISINTEGRATION. IN FACT, SOME OBSERVERS ARGUE THAT CHIRAC'S TAKEOVER IS THE ESSENTIAL INTERIM STEP TOWARD EVENTUAL "GISCARDISATION" OF THE UDR. WHETHER OR NOT CHIRAC AGREES WITH THIS GAME PLAN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PARIS 30302 02 OF 03 171935Z

IS ANOTHER MATTER, BUT FOR THE TIME BEING BOTH CHIRAC AND GISCARD ARE STRENGTHENED. GISCARD HAS SIX AND A HALF YEARS REMAINING AS PRESIDENT IN WHICH TO ORCHESTRATE THE NEXT STAGE OF THE POWER STRUGGLE.

9. TWO UDR DEPUTIES, RENE RIBIERE AND ROBERT BOULIN' HAVE ALREADY RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY' AND OTHER MAVERICK GAULLIST DEPUTIES MET DECEMBER 17 AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THERE WILL PROBABLY BE A FURTHER LOSS OF AT LEAST SOME UDR ACTIVISTS (THOUGH POSSIBLY NO MORE DEPUTIES FOR THE TIME BEING).

10. CHIRAC HAS UNDOUBTEDLY TAKEN THESE RISKS INTO CONSIDERATION, AND DECIDED THAT EMERGENCY SURGERY WAS PREFERABLE TO A CONTINUED GRADUAL EROSION OF THE UDR BODY. HE WILL HAVE TO MOVE FAST IF HE IS TO GIVE THE UDR THE NEW LEADERSHIP IT HAS BEEN LOOKING FOR. IN ORDER TO AVOID A SERIOUS CLASH AT THE ASSIZES HE WILL HAVE ONLY A FEW MONTHS TO CONVINCE THE SKEPTICS. MEANWHILE HE WILL HAVE TO PERFORM A DELICATE BALANCING ACT:

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 30302 03 OF 03 171931Z

45

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EURE-00 EB-07 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 OMB-01

/085 W

----- 090379

P 171910Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5236

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 30302

CONTINUING AS PRIME MINISTER TO BE CHIEF OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HEADING THE GAULLIST MOVEMENT AND STRIVING TO REJUVENATE IT.

11. WHILE CHIRAC'S RECENT PREDICTION THAT THE UDR WILL BE ABLE TO HOLD 150 ASSEMBLY SEATS IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS (THE GAULLISTS NOW HAVE AROUND 172) APPEARS OPTIMISTIC THE UDR UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP MAY WELL STAND A BETTER CHANCE OF REMAINING A LARGE -- IF NOT THE LARGEST -- PARLIAMENTARY GROUP. FOR THE TIME BEING, IT APPEARS THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE GAULLIST DEPUTIES WILL RALLY AROUND A UDR DRIVEN BY A LEADER WHO IS PERSONALLY AMBITIOUS, DETERMINED AND IN ADDITION CONTROLS THE LEVERS OF ADMINISTRATIVE POWER.

12. COMMENT. CHIRAC'S MOVE -- WHICH OPPOSITION LEADER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 30302 03 OF 03 171931Z

MITTERRAND CALLED A MINI-COUP D'ETAT WITHOUT REAL IMPORTANCE -- IS BOUND TO HAVE A MAJOR EFFECT ON THE FUTURE ORIENTATION OF THE UDR. THE POWER PLAY FULLY JUSTIFIES CHIRAC'S REPUTATION AS A "BULLDOZER". RATHER THAN WRECKING THE UDR, HOWEVER, IT MAY TURN OUT THAT -- BY IMPROVING ITS CHANCES FOR REJUVENATION AND HELPING TO OVERCOME ITS IMMOBILITY -- HE MAY ACTUALLY HAVE SAVED IT.
STONE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL LEADERS, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PARIS30302
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740367-0099
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741229/aaaaaylp.tel
Line Count: 324
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <24 MAR 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC TAKES OVER THE UDR SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER JACQUES CHIRAC, LIVING UP TO
TAGS: PINT, FR, (CHIRAC, JACQUES)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005